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REMARKS

Claims 1, 7-10, 12, 13, 19-25 and 27-30 have been amended, and claim 26 has been cancelled. New claims 35-39 have been added. Care had been taken to avoid the introduction of new matter. Claims 1-10, 12-25, and 27-39 are presently pending in the application.

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for his careful review of the present application, his thorough search and analysis of the prior art, and his indication that claims 2-3, 5, 7-10, 12-13, 15-16, 18-22, 23-25, 27-28, 30, and 32-34 contain allowable subject matter. In particular, the Examiner stated that claims 10 and 23 would be allowed if their corresponding objections are satisfactorily addressed, that claims 27, 32-34 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims; and that claims 2-3, 5, 7-9, 12-13, 15-16, 18-22, 24-25, 28, and 30 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph rejection and to include all of the limitations of the case claim and any intervening claims.

The Examiner objected to claims 1-10 and 12-34 due to informalities, and rejected claims 1-9, 12-22, and 24-25 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Claims 1, 4, 6, 14, 17, 26, 29, and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawai (U.S. Patent 6,518,823) in view of Chou (U.S. Patent No. 6,060,925). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Regarding these rejections to the claims, Applicants would like to thank Examiner Terry L. Englund for the marathon telephonic Examiner Interview (3:22 hr) conducted with Applicants' representative, Kenton R. Mullins, on March 8, 2006, at which time it was indicated by Examiner Englund that independent claims 1, 10 and 23, and the claims dependent therefrom, as presently amended, would appear to overcome the outstanding prior-art rejections. Examiner Englund stressed that he would need to review the case in greater detail before making a final

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decision, and that his review could change his current opinion. Applicants request that the outstanding objections and rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Regarding independent claim 26, this claim has been cancelled and incorporated into objected-to claims 27, 28, 30, 32 and 33. Similarly, new claims 35-39 correspond to versions of objected-to claims 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8, with the subject matter of claim 1 (as it existed before the Amendment of October 18, 2005) added thereto.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of same is requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

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